



CODES FOR NATIONAL SYMBOLS





NATIONAL SYMBOLS AND EMBLEMS

The preparations for Jamaica's Independence demanded that many issues of varying degrees of importance within their particular national context, had to be considered and agreement reached as to what might finally be acceptable to the Nation at large. Among these were such matters as the choice of a National Flag and Anthem as well as a number of other emblems which the country, and the world in general, would grow to accept as representative of the many facets of Jamaica's political, cultural and economic life.

On March 7, 1962, the Premier, Sir Alexander Bustamante, (subsequently, the Rt Excellent Sir Alexander Bustamante, National Hero) after consultation with the then Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Norman Washington Manley, MM, QC (subsequently, the Rt Excellent Norman Manley, National Hero), announced the appointment of the Independence Celebrations Committee. The Chairman of the Committee was Mr Theodore Sealy (subsequently, the Hon. Theodore Sealy, OJ, CBE).

The overall purpose of this Committee was to make recommendations to the House of Representatives on the subject of Jamaica's Independence Celebrations. This included recommendations for the National Symbols and Emblems. The Independence Celebrations Committee coordinated the work of several committees.

Earlier, at the end of September 1961, the Government had decided to hold competitions for a National Anthem and a National Flag for Independent Jamaica. It was decided also that an award of £100 would be paid for the accepted design for a National Flag.

Hundreds of entries were received for both competitions. Accordingly, a committee was named to settle adjudication procedures and to recommend the best designs and compositions to the Government which, in collaboration with a Joint Committee of the Legislature, would try to reach agreement on the final form of these matters.

THE JAMAICAN NATIONAL FLAG



TERMINOLOGY

Fly – The outer part of a flag; also the distance from the flagstaff to the outer edge

Hoist – The measurement of a flag along the staff; also the part of the flag nearest the staff

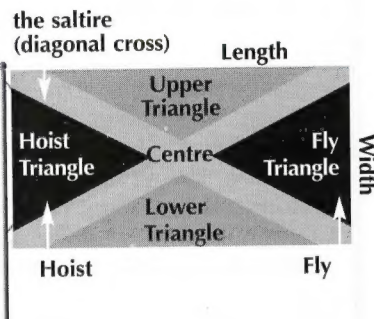
Length – The horizontal dimension of a flag

Proportions

or Ratio – The relative width (hoist) and length (fly) of a flag, e.g. 1:2.

Saltire – A cross of equal diagonal arms running from corner to corner of the flag

Width – The vertical dimension of a flag



The Flag

The Committee, after initial discussion, accepted the Government's suggestion that a short list of twelve designs should be prepared for presentation to the Joint Committee of Parliament, and recognized that the Joint Committee would be largely responsible for the choice of a suitable design.

An examination of approximately 360 entries for a National Flag was conducted and, after eliminations, a short list was forwarded to the Joint Committee of the Legislature, through the Independence Celebrations Committee, for adjudication.

None of the entries was thought suitable and the flag was eventually designed by a bipartisan committee of the Jamaican House of Representatives. The originally approved version, designed with vertical stripes, subsequently was found to closely resemble that of Tanganyika (now part of Tanzania) which had gained its independence only months before Jamaica, and the design was therefore modified.

The Jamaican National Flag

The National Flag came into use on August 6, 1962, Jamaica's Independence Day.

The Flag has a diagonal cross or saltire with four triangles in juxtaposition. The cross is in GOLD and the width of each of its bends (arms) is one-sixth of the length of the fly of the flag; the top and bottom triangles are in GREEN; and the hoist and fly triangles are in BLACK. The exact shade of green used in the Flag is Emerald T8 17, British Admiralty Bunting Pattern.

The flag follows the 'Admiralty Pattern' and the correct proportions are 1:2.

'The sun shineth; the land is green; and the people are strong and creative', is the symbolism of the Flag. Black stands for the strength and creativity of the people; Gold – natural beauty of the sunlight and the wealth of the country; and Green – hope and agricultural resources.

In February 1996, a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Professor the Hon. Rex Nettleford, OM, to examine national symbols and observances. One of the recommendations is that a new interpretation should be provided, avoiding the association of black with hardship or any symbolism that may be regarded as negative.

Code for use of the Flag

- (1) The Flag is to be regarded as the sacred emblem of the Nation to be paid due reverence and devotion by all its citizens.

- (2) The Flag should never be allowed to touch the ground or floor nor should it be flown or used for purely decorative purposes on anything that is for temporary use and likely to be discarded, except on state occasions.
- (3) When the Flag becomes worn and must be replaced, it should be burnt privately and not used for any purpose other than that for which it was designed.
- (4) The Jamaican Flag should never be smaller than any other flag flown at the same time.
- (5) No other flag should be placed above or to the right¹ of the Jamaican Flag, except at Foreign Embassies, Consulates and Missions. (International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace.)
- (6) Except at Foreign Embassies, Consulates and Missions, no foreign flag may be flown publicly, unless the Flag of Jamaica is also flown.
- (7) All merchant ships of Jamaican registration should fly the Flag.
- (8) The Flag should be flown at or near every polling station on election day.
- (9) The Flag, when carried in procession with another flag or flags, should be on the marching right or, if there is a single line of flags, in front of the centre of that line.
- (10) The Flag should not be draped over vehicles of any sort except those of the Military or Police and then, on State or official occasions.
- (11) During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the Flag, or when the Flag is passing in a parade or in a review, all persons present should face the Flag and stand at attention. Men should remove their hats.
- (12) The Flag should be flown at half-mast as a sign of official mourning when so declared by the Office of the Prime Minister, for a period determined by that Office.
- (13) The Flag, when flown at half-mast, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered slowly to the half-mast position, (i.e. two-thirds up between the top and bottom of the flagstaff). It should be raised to the peak before it is lowered at the end of the day.

¹ As seen from, say, a building looking outwards, i.e., the left when facing the building.

At Public Buildings

The Flag should be flown at all government and municipal buildings and offices, at or near the main administrative building, and it is recommended that, if possible, each day it should be flown from 8:00 a.m. to sunset.²

At Schools

The Flag should be flown at all government-aided schools when the school is in session.

At the beginning and end of each term, there should be a special Flag raising and lowering ceremony so organized that performance in the Ceremony should be regarded as a special privilege.

The National Pledge for schools should be recited on such occasions.

All Youth Camps, Clubs, and Institutions for young people should hold similar ceremonies.

Private Use

- The Flag may be flown at private buildings, particularly on all national and state occasions and should always be flown on any private building on the occasion of official visits by the Governor-General or the Prime Minister.
- The Flag should be flown at the official residences of the Governor-General and Prime Minister when in residence.
- The Flag should be flown on the Governor-General's and Prime Minister's cars.

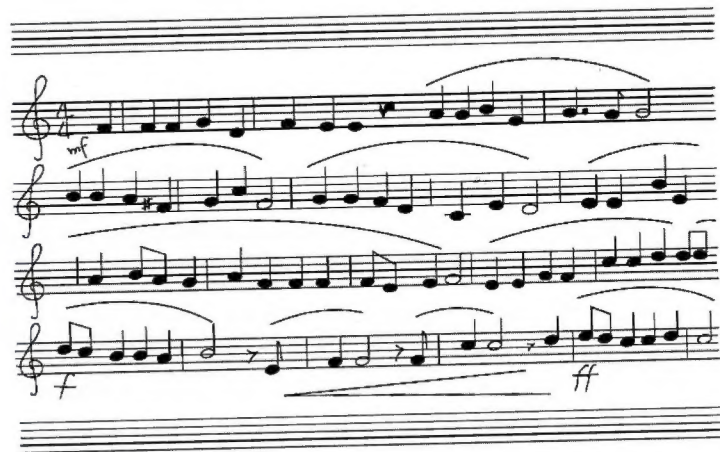
On Government Property

All government-owned ships and defence craft should fly the Flag. All Government-owned aircraft should bear a representation of the Flag.

² The Flag should never be flown 24 hours per day merely for convenience.



JAMAICA LAND WE LOVE



THE JAMAICAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

In September 1961, it was announced that the competition for the words of the National Anthem would be judged in the first instance. The successful script would then be published and a contest for the music put in train. Nearly one hundred entries for the words were received and it was subsequently announced on March 17 that the competition for the words of the National Anthem would close on Saturday March 31, 1962.

A Joint Committee of the Houses of Parliament was responsible for making the final selection. Members remained divided between two possible choices until Thursday July 19, 1962 when the large majority of the House, after eager debate, approved the resolution which was put to it and the version previously heard in the lobby was selected as suitable. The Anthem is the creative work of four persons, the late Rev. & Hon. Hugh Sherlock, OJ, OBE, the late Hon. Robert Lightbourne, OJ, the late Mapletoft Poulle and Mrs Poulle (now Mrs Raymond Lindo).



THE JAMAICA NATIONAL ANTHEM

Eternal Father bless our land,
Guard us with Thy Mighty Hand
Keep us free from evil powers,
Be our light through countless hours.
To our Leaders Great Defender,
Grant true wisdom from above.
Justice, Truth be ours forever,
Jamaica, Land we love.
Jamaica, Jamaica, Jamaica land we love.

Teach us true respect for all,
Stir response to duty's call,
Strengthen us the weak to cherish,
Give us vision lest we perish.
Knowledge send us Heavenly Father,
Grant true wisdom from above.
Justice, Truth be ours forever,
Jamaica, Land we love.
Jamaica, Jamaica, Jamaica land we love.

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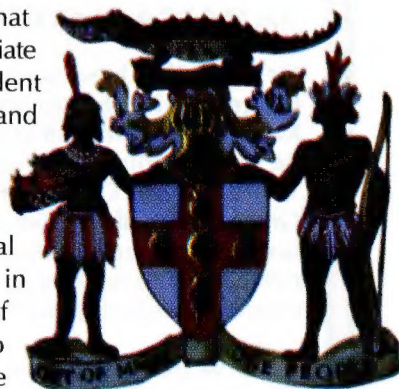
Code for use of National Anthem

- All persons should stand at attention, (i.e., heels together) at the playing of the National Anthem and men should remove their hats.
- The first verse of the National Anthem should be played or sung as specifically designated on the arrival of the Governor-General or the Prime Minister.
- The National Anthem may be sung or played at public gatherings.
- Singing of the National Anthem should form part of the ceremony of raising and lowering of the Flag at the beginning and end of term in schools and at Independence celebrations.

¹ The above is an exact copy of the original version of the National Anthem as distributed throughout Jamaica in July 1962 so as to enable everyone to learn the words of the Anthem. It is therefore the authoritative version as regards punctuation and the placing of capital letters.

THE ARMS OF JAMAICA

In giving consideration to what might be the form of an appropriate State Arms for an Independent Jamaica, both the Government and the Opposition reached agreement in principle that the existing Arms, granted to Jamaica in 1661 under Royal Warrant and partially revised in 1957, constituted 'a badge of great historical significance to the Nation and should be retained.'



The original Arms were designed by William Sancroft, subsequently (1678) Archbishop of Canterbury, and the use of the Royal Helmet and Mantlings together is a unique distinction accorded Jamaica. The original Latin motto, 'Indus Uterque Serviet Uni' has been changed to one in English: 'Out Of Many, One People'. The Arms shows a male and female Arawak or Taino standing on either side of the shield which bears a red cross with five golden pineapples superimposed on it. The crest is a Jamaican crocodile surmounting the Royal Helmet and Mantlings.

This is the official description of the Arms of Jamaica taken from the records of the College of Arms, London:

'For Arms, Argent on a Cross Gules five Pineapples slipped Or; And upon a representation of Our Royal Helmet mantled or doubled Ermine, for the Crest, on a Wreath Argent and Gules, Upon a Log fesse wise a Crocodile proper: And for the Supporters, on the dexter side a West Indian Native Woman holding in the exterior hand a Basket of Fruit and on the sinister side a West Indian Native Man supporting by the exterior hand a Bow all proper.'

Terminology

(Note: The language of heraldry derives from the standard Anglo-French of the Middle Ages.)

Argent	–	silver; traditionally represented in heraldic design by white
Gules	–	red
Slipped	–	(of a flower, leaf or fruit) depicted on a stalk
Or	–	gold
Mantling	–	a representation, usually fanciful, of the original small mantle which knights of old wore attached to the helmet so as to provide insulation from heat and dirt
Doubled	–	the principal colour of the arms doubled (lined) with another colour
Ermine	–	in heraldry, colour and colour tones are, in part, indicated by two designated metals, i.e. or, argent and by furs, e.g. ermine, traditionally represented by black spots and white background
Crest	–	the heraldic device or symbol placed above the helm or helmet, and almost invariably separated from it by a wreath or torse
Fesse	–	horizontal
Proper	–	realistic, in natural (not heraldic) colours
Supporters	–	sometimes human figures but more usually animals or birds, including those of mythology, e.g. unicorn, pegasus, etc., flanking the shield
Dexter	–	right (left as seen by the observer)
Sinister	–	left (right as seen by the observer)

Exterior	–	outer
All Proper	–	all representations of the relevant elements or features are in their natural colours

The use of the Arms should not be permitted without official sanction being first obtained from the Office of the Prime Minister.

Emblems

With the approval of the Cabinet, a select committee known as the National Flower Committee was appointed, initially to make recommendations for the choice of a National Flower. They were later asked to extend their activities to include the choice of a National Tree, a National Fruit and a National Bird.

The Jamaica Horticultural Society had been giving consideration to the choice of a National Flower from 1959. A short list of fourteen flowers had previously been prepared and given wide publicity in order to determine public opinion. On the basis of the response, the Jamaica Horticultural Society recommended to the National Flower Committee that the flower of the Lignum Vitae be chosen as the National Flower of Jamaica. This suggestion was approved.

The Flower Committee also recommended that the National Tree should be the Blue Mahoe; the National Fruit, the Ackee and the National Bird, the Doctor Bird or Swallow-tail Hummingbird.

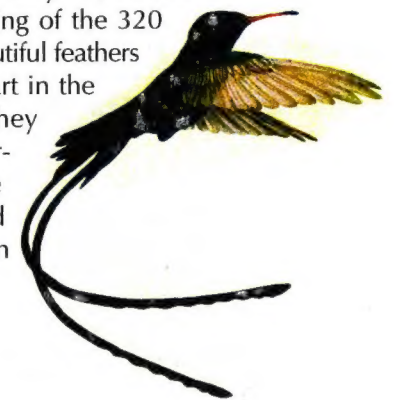
NATIONAL FLOWER – Lignum Vitae

LIGNUM VITAE (*Guaiacum officinale*) is indigenous to Jamaica and was found here by Christopher Columbus. It is thought that the name – translated from the Latin to mean ‘wood of life’ – was then adopted because of its medicinal qualities. The tree grows best in the dry woodlands along both the north and south coasts of the island. In addition to producing an attractive blue flower, the plant itself is very ornamental. The wood was once popular for use as propeller shaft bearings in nearly all the ships sailing the ‘Seven Seas’ and because of this, in shipyards worldwide, the lignum vitae and Jamaica were once closely associated.



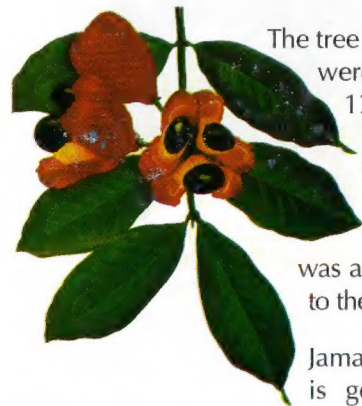
NATIONAL BIRD – The Doctor Bird or Swallow-tail Hummingbird

DOCTOR BIRD (*Trochilus polytmus*). The ‘Doctor Bird’ or Swallow-tail Hummingbird, lives only in Jamaica and is one of the most outstanding of the 320 species of hummingbirds. The beautiful feathers of these birds have no counterpart in the entire bird population and they produce iridescent colours characteristic only of that family. The doctor bird has been immortalized for many decades in Jamaican folklore and song.



NATIONAL FRUIT – The Ackee

ACKEE (*Blighia sapida*). Whilst not indigenous to Jamaica, this fruit has remarkable historic associations. It was originally imported from West Africa, probably brought here on a slave ship, and now grows luxuriantly, producing each year large quantities of edible fruit.



The tree was unknown to science until plants were taken from Jamaica to England in 1793 by Captain William Bligh (of 'Mutiny on the Bounty' fame), hence the botanical name 'Blighia sapida' in honour of the seafarer. One of the earliest local propagators of the tree was a Dr Thomas Clarke, who introduced it to the eastern parishes in 1778.

Jamaica is the only place where the fruit is generally recognized as an edible crop, although the plant has been introduced into most of the other Caribbean islands (Antigua, Barbados, Barbuda, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago) and Central America, and even Florida, where it is known by different names and does not thrive in economic quantities.

NATIONAL TREE – The Blue Mahoe

MAHOE (*Hibiscus elatus*). This has been regarded as one of our primary economic timbers. It is currently much used for re-forestation and is a valuable source of cabinet timber. Of an attractive blue-green colour with variegated yellow intrusions, it is capable of taking a high polish which highlights the variety of grain and colour tones.



THE NATIONAL PRAYER, THE PRAYER FOR NATIONAL UNITY AND THE NATIONAL PLEDGE AND SONG

While preparations for choosing the National Symbols progressed, the Minister of Education appointed a committee to see to the preparation of a National Prayer, National Pledge and a National Song, for use in all schools and similar institutions.

The following were finally chosen.

THE NATIONAL PRAYER

The Response is: 'We give Thee thanks, O God.'

Let us Pray: Let us give thanks for all God's goodness and the wonderful heritage into which we have entered:

For Jamaica, our island home, the land of our birth...

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

For the majesty of hills, the beauty of our valleys, and the flaming loveliness of our gardens...

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

For the warmth and brightness of our days and the calm and peace of our countryside...

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

For the rich heritage of our people coming from many races, and yet one in purpose, in achievement, and in destiny, and for the dignity of labour and the service given by every citizen of our land...

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

For freedom, just laws and our democratic way of life

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

For the high privilege and responsibility of Independence and for bringing us to nationhood...

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

For our parents, teachers, religious and other leaders and all those who in every walk of life are helping to prepare us for responsible citizenship, and for all those who are giving voluntary service in the public interest...

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

For the poets, artists and thinkers and all those who create in us the vision of a new and better society...

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

For our godly heritage, the example of Jesus Christ and the sacrifices of our fathers in the faith...

Response: We give Thee thanks, O God.

The Response is: 'Hear us we beseech Thee, O God.'

Bless, we pray Thee, our Queen, our Governor-General, our Prime Minister and other Ministers of State, our Parliament, and all who are sent in

authority over us and grant that under them we may be peacefully and justly governed...

Response: Hear us we beseech Thee, O God.

Grant us love and compassion for all those in need and distress and help us to remove poverty and ignorance from our land, and grant us prosperity and true wisdom, we pray...

Response: Hear us we beseech Thee, O God.

Forgive us all that is unworthy and evil in our national life, establish us in righteousness and inspire us to work for universal brotherhood, we pray...

Response: Hear us we beseech Thee, O God.

Guide and bless our nation we pray, and make us loyal and dutiful citizens through Almighty God, the Father of us all.

Amen.

Prayer for National Unity

In December 1972, a Prayer for National Unity was prepared as a guide by ecclesiastical and other religious bodies of Jamaica at the request of the Prime Minister:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for all the blessings of the past year, especially for sparing us from natural disasters and civil conflicts. We would give thanks even for those crises, personal and national, through which we have been challenged to greater efforts. As we face our problems, we are very conscious of Your guiding presence.

We acknowledge our shortcomings as a people, not only during this past year, but throughout our history. We have not been constant in our search for the common good; we have not always cared for those who suffer; we are sometimes blind to the needs of the young, and careless of the fate of the aged. We have not always

shared a sense of common purpose, nor have we been conscious of our national destiny. Our values have often been misplaced and we have expected too much for too little.

Give us the courage to accept Your forgiveness and to begin again under Your loving guidance. O Lord, save us from the sins of pride and self-righteousness and make us free and open for the future, especially for the year upon which we are embarking. Enable us to overcome our divisions and divisiveness. Help us to live with our diversities and with tolerance towards those who differ from us.

In the words of St. Francis of Assisi, we pray, 'Lord make us instruments of Your peace; where there is hate, let there be love; where malice, forgiveness; where disputes, reconciliation; where error, truth; where doubt, trust; where despair, hope; where darkness, Your light; where sorrow, joy.

O Master, let us strive more to comfort others, than to be comforted; to understand others, than to be understood; to love others, more than to be loved. For those who give, receive; those who forget themselves, find; those who forgive, receive forgiveness; and dying, we rise again to Eternal Life.'

Finally, we pray as a Nation, that You may strengthen our sense of being one people, having one aim and one destiny under God.

Amen.

National Pledge

For use at the beginning and end of term, and on other special occasions.

Before God and all mankind, I pledge the love and loyalty of my heart, the wisdom and courage of my mind, the strength and vigour of my body in the service of my fellow citizens; I promise to stand up for Justice, Brotherhood and Peace, to work diligently and creatively, to think generously and honestly, so that Jamaica may, under God, increase in beauty, fellowship and prosperity, and play her part in advancing the welfare of the whole human race.

Shorter Pledge for schools

Before God and all mankind, I pledge my love, my loyalty and skills, in the service of Jamaica and my fellow citizens. I promise to work diligently and to help build a prosperous and peaceful nation.

National Song

The National Song for schools is set to the tune of 'I Vow To Thee My Country'. It was written by the late Hon. Victor Stafford Reid, OJ.

I Pledge My Heart

1. I pledge my heart forever
To serve with humble pride
This shining homeland, ever
So long as earth abide.
2. I pledge my heart, this island
As God and faith shall live
My work, my strength, my love and
My loyalty to give.
3. O green isle of the Indies,
Jamaica, strong and free,
Our vows and loyal promises
O heartland, 'tis to Thee.

DISTINGUISHING FLAGS

For the Governor-General

The Governor-General has a distinguishing flag or personal standard, the design of which follows that used elsewhere in Commonwealth countries – the name of the country beneath a Tudor Crown surmounted by a lion in gold, all on a dark blue background. This flag is displayed beside the Jamaican Flag when he is in residence and on the Governor-General's car. The design of the flag was prepared in the College of Arms and is similar to those of most other Commonwealth countries of which The Queen is Head of State.



Governor-General's Wife

The wife of the Governor-General has a distinguishing flag for display on her car on designated occasions.



For the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister has a distinguishing flag or personal standard designed through the then Ministry of External Affairs and flown in conjunction with the Jamaican Flag wherever the Prime Minister is in residence, overseas and at the Office of the Prime Minister. A small replica is flown on his vehicle when the Prime Minister travels by motorcar.



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The following are public holidays under the Public General Holidays Law, Cap. 148:

- New Year's Day – January 1. When New Year's Day falls on a Sunday, the following day is officially celebrated as New Year's Day.
- Ash Wednesday – the first day in Lent. Can fall at earliest on February 4 and at latest March 10.
- Good Friday – the first Friday after the forty days following Ash Wednesday.
- Easter Monday – the Monday after Good Friday.
- National Labour Day – May 23. If May 23 falls on a Saturday or a Sunday, Labour Day shall be kept on the Monday following.
- Emancipation Day – August 1.
- Independence Day – August 6.
- National Heroes Day – third Monday in October.
- Christmas Day – December 25.
- Boxing Day – the day after Christmas Day. When Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, December 27 is also a public holiday.

ABBREVIATIONS

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| • CBE | – | Commander of the Order of the British Empire |
| • MM | – | Military Medal |
| • OBE | – | Officer of the Order of the British Empire |
| • OJ | – | Member of the Order of Jamaica |
| • OM | – | Member of the Order of Merit |
| • QC | – | Queen's Counsel |

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